

Tape 278

ELMO HARDY

Date: February 1991

Interviewed by Dick Ufford

Subject: Pardon Dodds Stories

Dick Ufford (DU): Tell me about Pardon Dodds.

Elmo Hardy (Elmo): Pardon Dodds' wife was my father's sister (?). My uncle and he was a great hand with kids and he always had lots of kids out there. He'd run them footraces. He'd play with them and all the young people liked him.

DU: He was a kind man.

Elmo: A kind man. To know him, you wouldn't think he could do a bad thing, if you want to call it that. I worked out there with him through the summer. We hauled wild hay and killed beef and stuff like that. A guy came into Vernal. His name was Shaw and he was a butcher. He stopped and got acquainted with Uncle Pard. He told Uncle Pard, he said, "I want to go into the butcher shop business and how about you supplying me with a beef." He said, "We'll work it so we both make some money." Uncle Pard said, "That will be fine, I'll have the beef."

So during the summer out there, while we were working out there, he would order a beef. Uncle Pard would rope it. Just right out there roping and then most of the time he would put two ropes on him in a V shape. Give one man a rope on this side of his saddle horse and one on the other side. Then part it back up to the V. He had a big, pearl-handled six-shooter, a .44 or .45, I guess, one or the other. He'd make so many steps, so many paces they'd call it, just step it right off, and pull that gun and whirl and shoot. That old beef would hit the ground.

DU: Shoot him right between the eyes.

Elmo: Right between the eyes. He used to play with us kids, though that you know. and maybe shoot a can or something. He didn't let us use the guns or nothing he just ? otherwise.

DU: He just entertained you.

Elmo: Yes. During the summer it got to be a lot of beef going in there and he wouldn't pay him for it. So one day Uncle Pard called him on the phone. By the way, Uncle Pard had a buckboard and a nice little team that he drove on. He could just really make that old wheel drive. But he called this Shaw up and told him, "Mr. Shaw I've got to have a little bit of money, I'm up against it for money." He said, "You owe me quite a bill." Shaw said, "You pot-gut if you ever ask me for money, I'll knock your head right off of your shoulders." Pard said, "I was so stunned I didn't know what to do for a minute." He said, "I'd seen this Shaw when he stayed with me just put his hand up on the fence, a board fence and just jump right over with one hand. He was just an acrobat." He said, "I don't think I'd have had any chance at all with him in a fight." He said, "I couldn't take that, so I got in my buckboard and went to Vernal." He had a ranch out here along

the hill.

He said, "When I got there to the butcher shop, I just laid my lines down on the sidewalk. My horses were good to stand." He said, "I walked inside and the counter came down like that and he said that guy walked down the counter and met me. He was on one side of the counter and I was on the other." I said to him, "Don't you ever talk to me like that again." He said, "Why you bean-belly," he says, "I'll kill you and right now." He went under the counter and brought a .38 up and snapped it right in his mouth. Pard said, "I could have bit the end right off." "Boy," he said, "My heart was a-pounding but I went for my own gun, I had it on me. During the ride down there in the buckboard I'd knocked it a little further around behind. It wasn't in place and the first draw I didn't get it." He said, "I came up with it real good just as he came up over the counter with another one." He said, "I blazed loose and I shot him right here. It went kitty-cornered and missed his jugular vein by a pinpoint and out over here.

DU: Out the other shoulder.

Elmo: Yes. He said, "At that point he was trying to work the gun that he'd brought out from under the counter. Apparently he didn't have the power to work, so I drilled him with another one." He said, "He grabbed onto a chair and tumbled and fell on the floor." He said, "I walked out. I left him for dead. If he hadn't've been dead I would have finished him." He said, "The worst thing you can do is kill a man, or half kill him, and leave him alive." He said, "He'll kill you then, someday. When I walked out of there, there were men a-gathering just as thick as you could stand around that buggy and coming in the door." He said, "I just got in my buckboard and the law got this Shaw and took him out of there and headed for the doctor's office. I went home and I figured the law would be after me in a little while. So I just wasn't going to be took, you know."

He had my cousin working for him and you knew Kick ? well. He give Kick a rifle. Told him which window to watch and he said, "I loaded my guns up and I wasn't about to go to no jail. The time went on and nobody come." The law knew him and knew his disposition and knew that there'd be a killing if they went up there after him.

DU: Now, that was out to his place out on the ranch?

EU: No. He had a home in town. His wife and daughters and two sons, I believe, lived in that since small kids. Kick, they called him Kick, that's Eldon (?), he was staying with Uncle Pard pretty much at that time. He was pretty much like Uncle Pard's boy and he depended a lot on Kick for things, you know. They never came that night ,so the next day they came up there to talk to him. He'd cooled off enough that he'd talk to them, but they didn't try to jail him. So let's see now, what comes next on that? Well, he, yes, they finally tried him. They took him to Grand Junction and tried him. I don't know if Shaw wanted the trial out there or Pard wanted it, but I'm a little mixed up. He had two fracasas and, yes, I think this is right. They took him to Grand Junction and tried him. I don't know what the outcome of the trial was, but they didn't jail him. He came home and then he went back out to the ranch.

Uncle Pard was getting up in age a little bit and I guess he thought it was about time he was getting rid of the ranch. So, he he came out here and he hired out over here to Gusher, on

the south side of the road that used to be a little bar in there.

DU: Is that on "The Strip?"

Elmo: I guess you'd call it "The Strip," yes. Pard went over there and he was the bartender and he was selling a lot of liquor to the Indians. They were his best customers. So ? out here to take him, and the federal man went in there and, I guess, dressed like an ordinary person. He said to Uncle Pard, "I'd like a glass of whiskey." Uncle Pard set him up a glass of whiskey and he rolled back his coat and he said, "You're under arrest. I work with the United States government." Uncle Pard said, "I just reached under the drawer and I come up with that pearl-handled six-shooter. I told him, 'Drink it. Drink it damn quick and drink it all.' "

He drank it all like a gentleman and went to Vernal and rounded up a posse. They came back out here. They circled that place and hollered and honked, tried to get him out of there. Finally, they went in and he wasn't there. Well, he was on the loose for four or five years. The law was after him all this time.

DU: That was for serving liquor to the Indians.

Elmo: Yes. He'd slip into Vernal and stay with a friend or relative over night. He had enough friends and relatives around that they were keeping him hid. Then he got sick, he got badly sick. He went down here to a doctor he knew and told the doctor, "Don't you call the law." I don't think the doctor did call the law, but somebody else did. He turned himself in. They had his trial and they gave him some kind of a sentence. I'm not sure if he spent any time in jail or not, but it was one of these sentences where you have a...

DU: Parole.

Elmo: Yes. Pard didn't live long after that. He soon died after that. I had a .25-.20 that he gave me for working out there. He never had money; he told me that when I went out there. "But Elmo," he said, "I'll pay you some way." So when we got the hay all up he said, "I got a dandy little gun in there that you'd really like that you can have." He gave me that .25-.20. I could drive nails (?). Man it was really a dandy little gun.

DU: Did Pard have kids of his own?

Elmo: Oh, yes. He had three girls and two boys.

DU: You don't know what happened to his pearl-handled six-shooter?

Elmo: No. I don't know what happened. I suppose his boy got it. His boy wasn't like him. After shooting this Shaw... I didn't tell you all that. This Shaw was here for a while and he picked up with a woman. He took her with him and went to Price and put up a butcher shop in Price. At this time I was working for Uncle Pard again. Uncle Pard said, "Someday I'll be riding out here in the brush and I'll be shot right off of my horse."

DU: By that Shaw.

Elmo: Yes. 'Cause Shaw told him, "I'll get you, Pard, I'll get you." One day Pard came home and he said, "I've got some good news. Shaw killed himself and his wife out in Price. That's the most relief I've had."

Then after this a while, Uncle Pard came over to my place. He never had owned a car and he said, "Elmo, I want you to take me up to the coal mine." I said, "OK." He'd let two young men and their wives get in his house out to the ranch. He'd gave them all the potatoes they could eat all winter. He furnished them at least part of the time with beef. When they left, they stole his chairs, his table and dishes, everything he had in there until he didn't have a place anybody could live in. He didn't tell me this when he told me he wanted me to take him to the coal mine. He located where these guys were.

So, I got him in my car, that old 1926 Ford I had. We went up to the coal mine and got out of the car. He went down to the cook shack and I just stood up on the dump. At this point I still didn't know what was up there. He was waiting down there and he motioned me down. I went down and he said, "You better stick around here by me. I might need some help. Those two big huskies down in that mine is the ones that stole all that stuff out of my house. The cook says they'll be out for dinner and we'll just wait."

Well, I was getting pretty uneasy. You know, I thought it was getting into something that might end up bad. Pretty soon those two fellows came out. If I ever heard two men get a lacing, I'll tell you, they got it. He said, "If I'd done the right thing, I'd just got my butcher knife out here and carved both of you so-and-so's's right on this dump. Half of it is, if you don't have that furniture back in twenty-four hours, I'll come back and do it." They must have knew him. They must've knew him real well.

DU: Did he get any compensation out of them?

Elmo: I don't think so.

DU: But he told them what he thought.

Elmo: He told them what he thought and then he got that furniture back. They knew him. He was known all over the country. Good natured, good man, but don't try to push him. I thought a lot of him. I was a little bit young or I'd have known a lot more than I know now because he would have relied on me for some of that hiding (?) and one thing and another. I wasn't quite that old. I was about maybe seventeen, eighteen years old.

DU: Now, Kick was your cousin?

Elmo: Kick was my cousin. Uncle Pard knew Kick.

DU: Kick was a little older than you.

Elmo: Yes, quite a little older, about seven years. When Kick lived with Uncle Pard, Arch

McConkie lived up there in Maeser and Kick's father had a place up there in Maeser. I think their places joined up in the field. Kick's mother was kind of a bad woman. I guess she drank a little and she was mean, mean to her own kids.

DU: What was her family's name?

Elmo: Alice. You knew Alice, Alice York?

DU: Her people were Yorks, her people were Hardy. She married my dad's brother, Nathan Hardy. Anyway, I guess she'd go up there and steal Arch McConkie's water, so they say, and I don't doubt she did. Well, Arch goes down there and I don't know whether he stuck her in the ditch or what he done. He threatened her and so Elza heard about this and he tells Uncle Pard, "I got to take a trip up to McConkies'. That so-and-so can't talk to my mother and do that to me." So Pard said, "All right. I'll just go with you."

Well, Arch's brother was there and they called Arch out of the house. Arch's brother was there and his name was Lib, and Kick told Arch to go down there and apologize to her. Arch wasn't going to do no such thing and Kick busted him. They fought around a while and Arch got Kick down and was giving the worst of it and Kick said, "I've had enough."

Uncle Pard was standing there and Arch's brother was standing there. He should have had enough. Arch set him up and Kick smashed him again right then. He just wanted to get out from under there, you see. That time Kick got him down and got a nail from in his pocket. He was just raking him over with that nail. Kick let him up. I'll take that back, Arch got the nail first. He was raking Kick all over with that nail, but Kick got up and some way or other Arch got a rock or a club. Uncle Pard just pulled out that pearl-handled six-shooter and says, "I wouldn't do that if I were you." I guess that ended right there.

DU: That ended the fracas.

Elmo: I guess Arch got a good licking; I guess Kick got a good licking. It was just nip and tuck.

DU: Well, that's pretty good. That's quite a story. Well, that's going to be great.

Elmo: It's kind of got off the beat there a time or two.

(Tape stopped. Another subject is being discussed when the tape begins again.)

Elmo: A lot of people misjudged Uncle Pard. I think, they thought he was a crook. I think he owed bills that he couldn't pay. He didn't have nothing to pay them with. They were going to foreclose his ranch in town. I met him in town one day and he said, "Elmo, those dirty so-and-sos down at the bank, I don't owe them too much, but they want to take my house in town and the one down at the ranch. I'm not going to put up with it. I'll have to get that old pearl-handled six-shooter out I guess."

I don't know what the outcome was, but they didn't foreclose him, not right then. He went in that bank and I guess he told them bankers how to eat the cabbage.

I was out there with him in the fall of the year. He and I went in to dinner, we was eating dinner. Two men came riding up on horses. I didn't know a man and I don't know now (?). Uncle Pard, when anybody came there, he'd feed them. Dinner, supper, whatever, he was welcome. So he set those guys down there to a big stew we had there. Best meat in the world. I heard one of those guys say to the other, "I'll bet you we're eating our own beef right now."

Well, I didn't dare tell Uncle Pard right then. So after they left, I was afraid he'd kill them both. After they left, I told Uncle Pard what they said. "Why," he says, "didn't you tell me?" "Those dirty so-and-so's come here and eat our food and then accuse me of having their beef." He was a good old man. I know he owed bills. They had an extravagant family. He'd even cook for his own hands. She never went out there and helped him.

Lady speaking: Who was she?

Elmo: That was Aunt Ruby. That was Aunt Ella's sister. She'd put the (?). Uncle Pard is a man that would put up for it. He'd sell another cow if he had to and get what they wanted. That big old brick house over there that Siddoway had, that was Dodd's house. That's where he was after he shot Shaw. That's where he had Kick and the doors all barred and the guns out.

DU: But his wife's name was Ruby?

Elmo: Ruby, Aunt Ruby. There was quite a few of those girls, but all of them weren't like that. Aunt Cora lived up in Colorado and she was just a common woman. She raised a few chickens to live on, you know, and had garden stuff. Then there was Aunt Hulda. She came off of Randlett country down here and they were poor people. So, the whole family wasn't like that, but a couple of girls.

DU: Well, Elmo, I appreciate this.

Elmo: I'm glad I could remember enough of it that you'd take.

DU: What's your age, Elmo?

Elmo: Eighty-four.

DU: You're eighty-four. When's your birthday?

Elmo: Next December second.

DU: Well, I've known you ever since I've been in this town, since I got back from World War II. I've known you ever since then. By golly, you and Mary are my friends.

Elmo: You're our friend, too.

